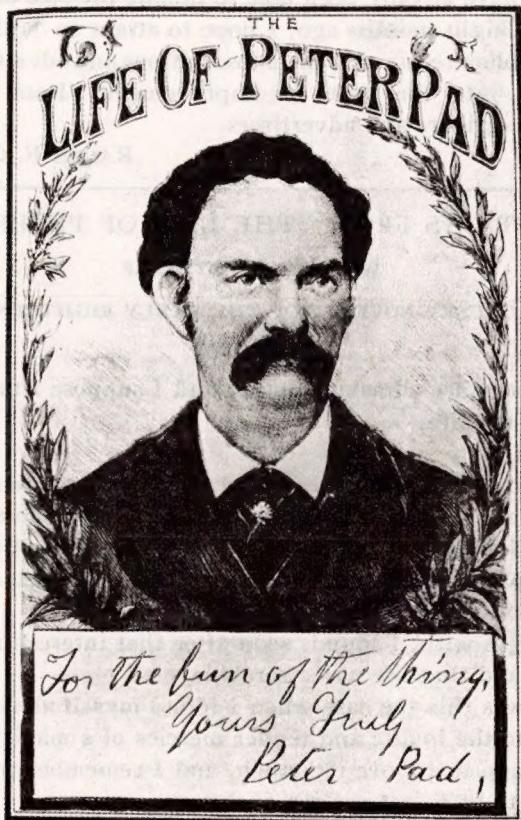


SEPTEMBER 1931

RECKLESS RALPH'S

# DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

OFFICIAL ORGAN HAPPY HOURS BROTHERHOOD



FRONT COVER OF A FAMOUS DIME BOOK OF FIFTY YEARS AGO

### A WORD FROM THE PUBLISHER

It is with great pleasure that I present to my subscribers the opening instalment of selections from the rare little dime book, "The Life of Peter Pad," written by himself and published by Frank Tousey in 1879. This is the first of a series of special features of outstanding merit and interest which are being prepared for early publication in DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP. My only regret is that the present size of my magazine prevents larger instalments of these features at a time except at the expense of variety of content. But as I have already been able to double the size of the paper since its first number, eight months ago, I hope to attain to still larger proportions. Every dollar received from subscriptions and advertisements is being put right back into the paper for improvement. I am, therefore, in the hands of my subscribers and advertisers.

RALPH F. CUMMINGS

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### SELECTIONS FROM "THE LIFE OF PETER PAD"

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

A FRANK TOUSEY NOVELTY OF THE EARLY EIGHTEEN EIGHTIES

PART ONE

Well, the boys are all asking for it, and I suppose I must do it.  
They want my life.  
And I yield it.

It isn't such a wonderful thing after all, but there are some funny passages in it, many of which my thousands of readers have enjoyed in connection with "Shorty," "Tommy Bounce," "Ebenezer Crow," "Tommy Dodd," "Stump," "Chips and Chin-Chin," etc., etc., etc., characters with which you are, of course, familiar.

Well, to begin with, I found, soon after that interesting event, that I had been born, and that life was a scrabble.

Especially was this the case when I found myself alone in the world, and given over to the loving and tender mercies of a maiden aunt.

She didn't appear to love me much, and I remember that her principal object appeared to be to get me out of the way.

But somehow or other she got out of the way first. The village sexton put her out of the way.

And thus I was once more left alone to the charities of the world, and at a very spring chicken age, too.

And the fun began about then, that is, the fun for everybody but me.

I finally got a situation as the editor of the wrapper department

of a weekly paper, and this for a while kept the wolf from the door, although I have always thought that had said wolf really known what I received for my work, he would have seen me hanged before he would have kept away. You see I bluffed the beast, and made a show of getting more money than I really did.

This is not a bad idea, and if everybody would adopt it, this "wolf at the door" business would soon get played out. All you have to do is to bluff, and live short on the sly.

During my life I had read a great many stories, funny and otherwise, and finally the idea occurred to me that I could write for the papers, especially for the boys, being a boy myself, as I have always remained since.

The conviction once entertained, I set myself to work on a funny story regarding "Little Mac," whom I afterwards treated for a great many weeks as *Shorty*.

It was a true incident, for I knew the little joker very well, and after finishing it, I took it to the editor of the paper on which I worked, writing wrappers, and asked him to read it.

He didn't know me from a case of boots, and reluctantly consented to read it, at the same time throwing a wet blanket over my hopes, by saying that they were very full of sketches, and unless it was very good, it would stand no chance at all. However, he told me to call on a certain day and learn the result.

But in the meantime he saw me at work in the same building, and thinking, perhaps, that I was a second Benjamin Franklin or somebody else, he proceeded to read my sketch.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

—o:—

## OLD BOWERY DAYS IN THE DIME NOVEL

BY FRED T. SINGLETON

D. Appleton & Company have published the chronicles of a famous street—"Old Bowery Days," by Alvin F. Harlow. It is a five-dollar book, but the novel stalker who cannot get his money back lacks imagination. The illustrations from old photographs and prints, at a fraction over six cents apiece, pay for it. Or, to cover the cost, count 544 candid and vivid pages of fascinating text at less than a cent a page.

I walked up and down the Bowery twice a day in nice weather, to and from work, in the closing years of the nineteenth century. New York's "storied old thoroughfare" was in the last phases of its "rowdyism, impudence and ribaldry." The colorful old East Side life of the 1870's had not yet been completely extinguished, and I got a chance to see some of the old landmarks of the "Gilded Age" before the shadows closed over the street. The old Bowery, therefore, is more to me than just another book.

But long before I ever glanced furtively up Pell Street into Chinatown,

or stared resentfully at the Yiddish playbills in front of what had once been the far-famed old Bowery Theatre, or drank a glass of beer in the old Atlantic Garden, I had read many a tale about the Bowery in the story papers and dime and nickel novels of my boyhood days out in Kansas City, and always had a soft spot in my heart for the city street lads—the bootblacks, newsboys and tatterdemalions—of the popular fiction of the late 1880's. I have just finished reading again, after more than forty years, "Buttons; or, Climbing to the Top. A Story of a Bootblack's Luck and Pluck," by Ralph Morton, which I read with "bated breath and clenched fingers" as a serial in *Young Men of America*, in 1889. This is a story of New York street life in the 1860's, contrasted, in the latter half of the story, with a trip to the front with a New York regiment during the Civil War. The queer little character, "Buttons," so called because his ragged garments were covered with buttons of every conceivable size, shape and material, won my sympathy and admiration. I have before me, as I write these lines, a run of Frank Tousey's *Young Men of America*, in "brand new" condition containing this serial, and the woodcut visualization of the hero in the opening instalment is a winner. You can count every button! The printer's ink has spread a little on the creaseless page, giving a brilliant effect to the impression.

As a raw recruit in the ranks of twentieth century novel stackers, perhaps I should be slow to express my opinion on present-day fashions of collecting. And in the final analysis it is usually every man to his own taste. But I cannot readily justify collecting novels as units in numbered serial publications. I am for calling novels by titles instead of by numbers. I am unable to appreciate the courageous efforts being made by some collectors to stack up every issue of *Pluck and Luck*, *Brave and Bold*, *Tip Top* and other serials. What I can understand and appreciate would be collecting novels in groups under subject divisions such as, for instance, "Oid Bowery Days," in whatever library or publication serial they might be found. This, to me, would be more interesting and certainly more profitable, because every item added to the collection would increase the value of the entire collection, whereas just another *Pluck and Luck* means just another quarter or half dollar.

You can pick your own subject. The Bowery was suggested to me by Alvin F. Harlow's new book. Your taste might be for arctic exploration, or for stories of adventure in search of lost civilizations, or for tales of famous hunters, trappers and guides, all of which have fascinating collecting possibilities. To start a Bowery novel list, I suggest "The White Wizard of the Bowery; or, The Boy Slaves of New York," by Alexander Armstrong, and "From the Streets; or, The Fortunes of a Bootblack. A true Story of the Bowery," by N. S. Wood. Limited space in our magazine forbids an extended list at this time.

If there are any readers of these lines who check with my collecting

scheme, I should like to hear from them. And I shall be glad to hear from all who have read stories in which the old Bowery is part of the scenery. Send along the titles and authors, the name of the library or publication in which they appeared, the date of issue and, if possible, a few lines on just how the Bowery gets in the picture. Perhaps we might persuade our publisher to build up a list of Bowery stories from month to month as well as lists of novels under other interesting subject headings.

—:o:—

## SIX HUNDRED DIME NOVELS FOR FIFTEEN DOLLARS BY "JACK HARKAWAY"

Yes, that's right—two and one-half cents each!

Bill Burns is the man who landed 'em.

Yes, right again—Mr. W. M. Burns, the well-known Yankee novel connoisseur and trader, of Rockland, Maine.

Bill claims that he is just a poor man, working for small wages, with a family to support and everything, but, between you and me, when it comes to building up a collection of old-time novels without any capital, he is right in the millionaire class.

Bill stumbled over a stack of 600 numbers of *Old Sleuth Library* in a bookseller's basement several years ago, and then beat down the dealer's price for these rare old black and whites from five cents each to two and one-half cents each. He doesn't give all the sordid details, but after closing the deal he probably had grit enough left to borrow the dealer's pushcart in which to get the stuff home!

"From a pushcart full of novels to plenty of 'em" ought to be the motto over the mantel in Bill's novel library. For he has run that stack of 600 dime novels up into a top notch collection of marvelous old-time black and white and colored cover wonders that money won't buy.

In his boyhood days Bill Burns read hundreds of dime novels, nickel libraries and story papers, just as every other red blooded kid did before the War. But about fifteen years ago reading and trading them lost their lure, and he went in for more serious reading, just as every other young he-man did in those days. And, just like the rest of us, he gave his novels away, or otherwise disposed of them. All except about a dozen or so which, luckily, as the sequel shows, he kept.

The years went by. Bill was reading standard magazines and highbrow books. Three or four years ago he read in a magazine a bookseller's advertisement offering for sale several titles by his favorite author, H. Rider Haggard. Bill ordered the books. In the package which the postman brought were several copies of a little journal devoted to dime novel collecting and a letter from the dealer in the next mail inquired if he had any old novels for sale or trade.

This was too much for the old novel microbes still circulating in

Bill's system. It was just like waving the old red rag in front of the bull. Bill charged full tilt, dug out those few old novels he had saved, traded them for a fresh lot, and sat up nights reading them. Then, hungry for more, he began to inquire for some of the old favorite stories of his boyhood days. Yes, they could be had—at a price! The thrillers for which he paid a nickel in the old days were now selling at from twenty-five cents up to several dollars apiece.

What with the rent, and the wife and kiddies to feed, Bill had just about given up all hope of ever being able to get together a bunch of his old favorites, when he fell over that stack of them down in the bookseller's basement. With this gold-mine as a foundation for trading, he joined the Happy Hours Brotherhood, and as fast as he could read those Old Sleuth stories traded them for other novels. He found that he could get three or four colored covers and one or two black and whites for each title in his *Old Sleuth Library* stack. His collection began to climb, and before many months had passed he was making trades with the big operators.

Bill Burns keeps track of wants of members of the Brotherhood, watches chances, trades a thrilling story in the *New York Detective Library* for a romantic highwayman tale in DeWitt's *Claude Duval Series*, for instance, and then trades the DeWitt for four red-hot titles in *Beadle's Dime Library*, and in a few years has built up a good collection of rare old-time novels without any expense except for letter-paper and postage.

Essentially a trader, he collects old-time novels to read and then to trade. His success is due to his patience, to the time and thought he spends on writing letters and arranging trades, and to the fact that he is a good judge of values in popular literature.

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#### JONNIE JONES' DIARY

(SEE JUNE ISSUE FOR PRIZES OFFERED IF YOU GUESS AUTHOR'S NAME)

PART FOUR

June 21—Traded some more novuls again today. Got some *Bound to Wins*, *Pluck and Lucks* and *Frank Reades*. By Heck, those Reade stories are awful lies, but good yarns all the same.

Am reading "Fatherless Bob at Sea," by Bracethebridge Hy Men. It is a good story. I am goin to be a sailor when I grow up, and fight piruts and harp-on wales. Paw is reading a *Beadle's Dime* called "The Ocean Ogaree," or something like that. Wisht he would hurry up and git dun with it and give it two me.

It rained hard all day today, and I had to stay in the hous. Got the cat and dorg to fitin and maw drove them out in the rain. Hit maw's enlarged pictur of her and paw, with a ball. The durn pitchur had to fall down off the wall and break. Wuz puttin some coal in the heater and a hot one flew out and burnt a hole in maws new carpet. Poor maw, gess she is glad that it don't rane every day and keep me in the hous.

July 8—Went over two see Mary Brown today. Mary's my gurl. She wuz readin a book called "Littul Wimen." Showed me a nother one called "Littul Men." I looked it over but it wuz orful. Nobuddy kild in the first three chapters. This wuz two slo fur me, and I sez, "Mary how can you read such trash, why not read suthin like "Young Wild West and the Pawney Princes," or "Nick Carter's Gold Hunt" or sum other good yarn." You orter seen the shukt look that kum over Mary's face. She looked like she had just taken castor oil. Sez she "Jonny Jones you orter read suthin to improv your mind instead of such trashy litteratoor."

This made me mad and I sez "Mary Brown my paw reads novuls reglar, and whut's good enuf fur paw is good enuf fur me." Just then I lookt up and seen Mr. Brown standin neer us. He had herd whut I sed, and had a norful funny look on his face, but didn't say anything. I cudn't tell if he wuz tickled or mad.

But I gess he is a he man like paw and me.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

:-o:-

## ON THE TRAIL OF THE NOVEL HUNTERS

BY "DEADWOOD DICK"

GEORGE C. FOSTER . . . knows the old-time English boys' journals and books . . . can tell you all about *Boy's Friend*, *Gem*, *Pluck*, *Magnet Empire*, and all the other favorites of twenty to thirty years ago.

JOSEPH PARKS . . . publishes *The Collector's Miscellany* . . . well posted on English popular literature clear back to the 1840's . . . collects match-box labels and other novelties, too.

W. B. McCAFFERTY . . . writes good poetry and everything about old-time novels and story papers . . . knows the old Southwest like a book . . . a gallant champion of popular romantic literature.

PATRICK MULHALL . . . has written an article for our magazine . . . on the old English boys' journals published by George Emmett fifty to sixty years ago . . . will appear soon.

:-o:-

## CHECK LIST OF POPULAR AMERICAN NOVELS

Item No. 9—*Morrison's Sensational Series*. Size, 8 by 11½, two cols. to a page, sixteen pages, good illustrations on front covers, black and white. Published by John W. Morrison, 13-15 Vandewater Street, New York City. Some titles: No. 1, "Leo Hartman;" No. 3, "Billy the Kid;" No. 4, "The James Boys;" No. 8, "The Williams Boys;" No. 46, "Frank James on the Trail;" No. 58 "Capture of Dick Little." These interesting novels came out in 1882, and sold for five cents. They were riding on the crest of the crime wave of their day. Some of them are beauties.

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 $\frac{1}{4}$  page \$1.50;  $\frac{1}{2}$  page \$2.75;  
 full page \$5.00. (Allow about  
 30 words to inch). Four consecutive ads for price of three.  
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**WANTED**

Cavalier, Norfolk, Va.,  
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 Balzac Library, daily,  
 M'lle New York,  
 Bacon Library, 1900,  
 Maggie, by Johnston Smith,  
 On Going to Church, 1896,  
 Monsieur Beaucaire, Apr., 1900,  
 Philistine, Oct., 1896, Jan., 1897.  
 Kipling, Gypsy Trail,  
 Crane, Red Badge, 1895,  
 Last Words, 1902.

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